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ABSTRACT

Determining the appropriate amount and type of teacher and student input is a complex curriculum and instructional challenge for writing teachers. This paper describes a teacher-researcher's experiences while teaching a fifth-grade class and studying a developing writer's workshop approach to writing instruction. She investigated: (1) how students interpret literacy activities and how participation in social context stressing negotiation, shared responsibilities, student voice, and ownership influences students' self-images as writers, their writing, and their contributions to others' learning; and (2) how the teacher's role shapes students' interpretations. The paper discusses negotiation of the literacy curriculum in a writers' workshop, focusing on two female students' participation and development as writers. Writing conferences, group work, collaborative writing, and sharing shaped these students' growing sense of ownership and proficiency and transformed the teacher's own role. Certain experiences in the curriculum-negotiation process can be viewed as "sources for struggle" among teachers and students. Teachers can use these experiences as rich resources for learning about students' interpretations of curriculum, their participation in the learning community, and the teacher's role in shaping interpretations. Growing mutual respect for variant teacher/student interpretations transcends curriculum "control" concerns; teachers gain by learning how to foster writing proficiency in all students. Two tables and one figure detailing aspects of the classroom literacy environment and the writers' workshop are included. Contains 40 references.
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NEGOTIATING A LITERACY CURRICULUM: ISSUES OF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

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Additional LISSS project participants are Corinna Hasbach, Constanza Hazelwood, and Kathleen Peasley (research assistants); and Elaine Hoekwater (fifth-grade teacher) and Carol Ligett (third-grade teacher). Hazelwood and Peasley assisted with field notes, audiotaping, and interviewing. Lindquist and I were responsible for coteaching writing to two classes of fifth graders while conducting research on our teaching and our students' learning. Other project participants taught science and social studies and conducted research on teaching and learning in different collaborative arrangements.

Abstract

Figuring out the appropriate amount and type of teacher and student input in classrooms is a complex curriculum and instructional challenge that writing teachers face daily. Rosaen addressed this challenge when she took on a teacher-researcher role in a fifth-grade classroom as part of her collaborative work with a group of educators. Across one school year, she taught and studied the establishment of a writers' workshop approach to teaching writing. In that context, the following issues were investigated: (a) how students interpret literacy activities and how participation in a social context that emphasizes negotiation, shared responsibilities, student voice, and ownership influences their images of themselves as writers, the actual writing they do, and the contributions they make to others' learning, and (b) how the teacher's role shapes students' interpretations.

This paper includes a detailed description of how the literacy curriculum was negotiated in a writers' workshop in relation to two students' participation and development as writers across one school year. It describes Maria's and Sarah's role relationships with their teachers and peers and traces how they interpreted a workshop approach to writing instruction as they gradually took on increased control, voice, rights, and responsibilities as writers. The paper illustrates how experiences such as writing conferences, group work, collaborative writing, and sharing shaped these students' growing sense of ownership over the writing process, their sense of themselves as writers and participants in a writing community, and their writing knowledge and skill.

This close examination of two students' participation and learning in relation to the teacher's role in a writers' workshop provides a rich picture of how shared control of a literacy curriculum plays out in a specific classroom context. It provides insights into teaching questions such as: When students share control over writing decisions, what are appropriate ways for teachers to provide ongoing instruction that honors their control? When differences in teachers' and students' perceptions about the curriculum and classroom activities arise, how should these differences be resolved? How can teachers balance their support for the social and learning needs of individuals with the social and learning needs of the whole class?

The paper illustrates how some experiences in the curriculum negotiation process can be viewed as "sources for struggle" among teachers and students. Teachers can use these experiences as rich resources for learning about students' interpretations of curriculum, their participation in the learning community, and the teacher's role in shaping student's interpretations. "Control" over curriculum can be viewed as more than autonomy of choice and also include the extent to which students and teachers respect each others' interpretations of the curriculum. By viewing students and the curriculum negotiation process as resources for reflecting on curriculum issues and tensions, teachers can make informed decisions about how to carry out their responsibility to see to it that all students grow as writers while still fostering in students a sense of ownership for writing and a commitment to their own growth.

NEGOTIATING A LITERACY CURRICULUM: ISSUES OF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

Cheryl L. Rosaen

Teachers struggle with the issue of how much influence their students should have in curriculum development and classroom activities, especially in light of theory and research that shows the prominent roles students' prior knowledge, experience, and social interaction play in their learning (e.g., Dewey, 1936; Rowland, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1986). Some educators suggest pooling the resources teachers and students bring to optimize the potential for learning:

> Ideally, both teachers and students should bring all of their skills, wisdom, and energy to the teaching-learning transaction. We should not relinquish our identities as teachers in order to give students ownership of their craft . . . We need not be afraid to teach, but we do need to think carefully about the kinds of input which will be helpful to our students. (Calkins, 1986, p. 165)

Figuring out the appropriate amount and type of teacher and student input is a complex curriculum and instructional challenge that writing teachers face daily. I struggled with this challenge first hand when I took on a teacher-researcher role in a fifth-grade classroom as part of my collaborative work with a group of educators. Across one school year, I taught and studied the establishment of a writers' workshop approach to teaching writing. In this context, I investigated: (a) how students interpret literacy activities and how participation in a social context that emphasizes negotiation, shared responsibilities, student voice, and ownership influences their images of themselves as writers, the actual writing they do, and the contributions they make to others' learning, and (b) how the teacher's role shapes students' interpretations.

In this paper I provide a detailed description of how the literacy curriculum was negotiated in a writers' workshop in relation to two students' participation and

development as writers across one school year. I describe Maria's and Sarah's[1] role relationships with their teachers and peers, and trace how they interpreted a workshop approach to writing instruction as they gradually took on increased control, voice, rights, and responsibilities as writers. The paper illustrates how experiences such as writing conferences, group work, collaborative writing, and sharing shaped their growing sense of ownership over the writing process, their sense of themselves as writers and participants in a writing community, and their writing knowledge and skill. This close examination of two students' participation and learning in relation to the teacher's role in a writers' workshop provides a rich picture of how shared control of a literacy curriculum plays out in a specific classroom context. It illustrates ways in which the curriculum negotiation process itself is a rich resource for teachers to learn about their students and reflect on curriculum issues and tensions.

The Study: Research Questions and Methodology

Developing Teaching and Research Questions

Choosing an instructional model. A whole language philosophy (e.g., Goodman, 1986, Hansen, 1986) is based on the premise that children become literate (e.g., learn knowledge, skills, and dispositions) by using language (reading, writing, speaking, listening) for a range of purposes in meaningful contexts. Advocates of the philosophy argue that students need to share control over the literacy curriculum with teachers and curriculum should be a negotiation among students and teachers if language experiences are to be authentic and meaningful. Students interpret literacy activities psychologically (Barnes, 1976; Bruner, 1960; Posner, Strike, Hewson & Gertzog, 1982) but they do so within a social context, and that context influences what and how they learn (Erickson, 1982; Rosaen, 1989, 1990;

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[1] Pseudonyms are used to discuss all students.

Vygotsky, 1962). Therefore, the learning process is not well supported when learning knowledge is separated from knowing (Shannon, 1989). Moreover, messages about voice and power are communicated through the selection and enactment of content and pedagogy in classrooms (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Bernstein, 1975; Giroux, 1981). Educators must be mindful of which opportunities for current and future learning are being provided or closed off by their decisions (Delpit, 1986, 1988; Dewey, 1936, Rosaen, 1989).

A writers' workshop is an instructional model that is recommended frequently in the writing literature (e.g., Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1983, 1986, 1990; Graves, 1983). It provides some concrete images of how one might teach in ways that are consistent with a whole language philosophy. This model allows the teacher to support specific aspects of the writing process over time while sharing control of the curriculum with students more democratically. It also allows the teacher to support students in learning to write for a variety of purposes: transactional, expressive, and poetic (Britton, Burgess, Martin, Mcleod & Rosaen, 1975). For example, the teacher's responsibility is to create a structure and social context within which students can write on a regular basis, share their writing with others for the purposes of celebrating finished pieces or get feedback and assistance in making revisions. In this context, the teacher is responsible for supporting students in using writing to develop: (a) personal knowledge (of self and one's relationship to others); (b) social knowledge (of others, of contexts in which readers may interpret writing, of audience); and (c) knowledge and language of texts (Probst, 1991). Teachers also need to help students develop strategic control over making the decisions associated with creating a piece of writing for a particular audience and foster in students the disposition to write. Teacher support comes in the form of helping students learn about ways to manage the writing process and to improve the texts they create, mainly through writing conferences, sharing sessions, and mini-lessons. It is

further advised that students will develop ownership for their writing only if they can experience what Moffett (1979) calls the full range of authorship decisions, such as choosing their own writing topics, purposes, forms, audience, and time frames for generating and publishing pieces. In a workshop model, writers learn about, practice, and perfect the craft of writing by exercising a great deal of control over a range of writing decisions.

Because the whole language philosophy is consistent with my understandings of literacy learning, this model was a promising framework for guiding my decisions about how to support students' learning while still sharing control of the curriculum with students. Rowland's (1986) words captured one of the issues this model helped me think about: "Surely, we should guide children into new paths towards knowledge, but avoid holding their hands too tightly for too long. Otherwise they may fail to assimilate such knowledge into their own experience" (p. 29).

Teaching issues and questions. I began my year as a teacher-researcher with a set of teaching questions with which I have struggled throughout my career as a language arts teacher and a teacher of language arts methods to prospective teachers. Although I did not expect the teacher-researcher role to enable me to develop definitive answers, I hoped it would further my thinking and help me gain some insights into ways to address the following issues: When students share control over writing decisions, what are appropriate ways for teachers to provide ongoing instruction that honors their control? When differences in teachers' and students' perceptions about the curriculum and classroom activities arise, how should these differences be resolved? How can teachers balance their support for the social and learning needs of individuals with the social and learning needs of the whole class?

The importance of the social context in supporting the learning process in all subject matter areas has become better understood in recent years (Featherstone, 1990; Hill & Hill, 1990; Marshall, 1990; Shannon, 1989). With the LISSS group, I spent

a great deal of time and effort trying to articulate the qualities required in a learning community in which learning is the primary focus (Rosaen with Hazelwood, 1993; Rosaen, Lindquist, Peasley & Hazelwood, 1992; Roth, 1992; Roth, Peasley & Hazelwood, 1992). As we taught, researched our teaching, and reflected across the year, we revised our ideas several times, each time striving for more clarity.

Table 1 summarizes our current thinking and reflects the qualities we have come to value in our learning community. For example, the qualities of caring, respect, trust, and appreciation of diversity are part of of a classroom culture that supports genuine inquiry. When students have shared goals and work collaboratively on joint problems of mutual interest, genuine inquiry can take place. Students need to develop personal qualities to become full participants in a learning community, such as having personally meaningful learning as a commitment and goal, and the desire to go on learning. Students must also appreciate the value in both the process and products in learning. Academic, social and personal knowledge is constructed socially. Expertise comes from multiple sources, and use of evidence and shared expertise from within and outside the learning community is common. All voices in the learning community are heard and valued. Ideas are publicly shared and explored with the expectation that revision of ideas is a natural and valued part of learning. The teacher's role in a learning community is one of a collaborative learner as well as instructional leader who carefully develops curriculum and fosters a collaborative culture.

These emerging ideas led me to ask several questions about the relationship between the writing in which our students engaged and the learning community in which they participated. How can writing be an integral and vital part of the overall learning process? How can writing help students learn to participate in a community of learners? How can writing tasks be structured so they are congruent with the norms of interaction in the learning community?

Table 1
Learning Community Qualities

The classroom culture supports collaborative inquiry:	**The group has collaborative responsibilities**
*celebration of learning *celebration and appreciation of diversity *caring *trust *respect *helping and being helped *positive interdependence *inquiry *a relation of persons, not just of roles or ranks	*collaboration on joint problems and questions of mutual interest *shared goals *shared responsibility for learning of all *shared responsibility for curriculum construction
Individuals are personally involved in and committed to learning	**The teacher facilitates and participates in the culture of collaborative inquiry**
*personally meaningful learning as a goal *personal and active involvement in meaningful and authentic problems (talk, write, do, inquire) *ownership, commitment to learning for self and others *desire to go on learning *value both process and products in learning	*pursues genuine, meaningful and authentic problems with students *fosters collaborative classroom culture *shares control over curriculum with students *has commitment to access to knowledge for all students *values and hears all student voices *participates in learning community as co-constructor (not dispenser) of knowledge *reflects carefully and regularly about curriculum development and student learning *encourages and supports development of personal qualities in each learner
Knowledge is socially constructed	
*knowledge is personal, social, and academic *strategic awareness and use of skills *inquiry, asking questions *expertise comes from multiple sources, including students' personal histories *use of evidence, shared expertise as authority for knowing *rational, narrative and aesthetic ways of knowing are all valid and ways to integrate different ways of knowing are sought *multiple connections within and across subject matter areas are explored *valuing and respect for others' ideas are key aspects of knowledge construction *public exploration sharing and revision of ideas *all voices are important and heard	

Research questions. To gain insights into my teaching questions, I used the research process to document and analyze three aspects of the writing curriculum: (a) the intended curriculum, (b) the negotiated (enacted) curriculum, including the subject matter content and the development of the learning community, and (c) individual meaning constructed by students. To pursue issues related to the intended and enacted curriculum, I focused on the following questions:

Curriculum and knowledge construction:

(a) How is the curriculum selected, organized and sequenced? To what extent does the curriculum support social construction of academic, social, and personal knowledge?

(b) In what kinds of writing are students engaged? For what purposes? Who is the primary audience?

(c) How are writing tasks connected to broad instructional goals?

The learning community:

(a) To what extent does writing enhance and support a culture of collaborative inquiry?

(b) To what extent do writing tasks support students in being personally involved in and committed to learning?

(c) To what extent do writing tasks require and support collaborative group responsibilities?

The teacher's role in relation to writing tasks:

(a) To what extent is control over writing tasks shared with students?

(b) How does the teacher support students in learning to write? In writing to learn?

(c) What is the nature of the teacher's response to writing? To what extent are other members of the learning community involved in responding to writing?

I also developed a set of learning questions through which I tried to discover links between the students' interpretations of classroom events and their learning:

(a) How do students interpret and act on shared responsibility for the curriculum and classroom activities and their own learning?

(b) In relation to learning to write and participate in a community of writers, what knowledge, skills, ways of knowing, ways of being in a learning community, and dispositions do students develop?

Through these questions, I hoped to learn more about how students interpreted literacy activities psychologically, politically, and socially (Shannon, 1989), and how those interpretations of the negotiated curriculum shaped their developing understandings over time.

The Teacher-Researcher Role

Three years ago I began working in a project called Literacy in Science and Social Studies (LISSS) that included myself, Kathleen Roth, three research assistants, and three classroom teachers. In the larger project, we explored ways to teach for understanding in science and social studies, with an emphasis on studying ways in which discourse and writing can be used effectively to promote understanding for all students. In the second year of the project, the group participants took on what we call a teacher-researcher role to learn new ways to study students' thinking in a classroom setting and to study our own teaching practice. In Lindquist's classroom, I coplanned and cotaught a writers' workshop across the year and shared the teacher-researcher role, with research assistance from Hazelwood and Peasley.

The Students

The 22 fifth-grade students[2] in this classroom lived in a community that was changing in relation to the growth of an adjacent midsize city. Starting out as a

[2] Our study included two groups of fifth-graders for a total of 47. Maria and Sarah, the two students discussed in this paper, were from the class of 22 students.

predominantly rural, blue-collar community, it was gradually becoming a suburb of the city. New subdivisions were being built that attracted more professional and paraprofessional families. While most of the parents of the students in Lindquist's class had not attended college, two parents were professionals. This elementary school is considered to have the highest number of at-risk students of the five elementary schools in the district. Many students in the school live in a neighboring trailer park and are living on low family incomes.

The 22 students included one mainstreamed special education student, four older students who had repeated a grade, two students pulled out for speech therapy, and a number of students who had been on the Chapter 1 reading-resource teacher's load (although only one was seeing the teacher at the time of the study). While the students represented the usual range of academic abilities, Lindquist noted that this class had lower achievement test and IQ scores than previous classes. Racially, the class reflected the community composition: 17 Caucasian students, 1 African-American student, 3 Hispanic students, and 1 student of Native-American descent.

Target Students

All 22 students were studied during whole-class discussion and writing activities in both science and writers' workshop. Target groups of students were the focus of study during small-group discussions and activities. In writers' workshop, nine target students in this class were chosen toward the end of the year for more intensive study (six females and three males) to represent a range of abilities, interest in writing, and participation in the classroom. Target students include those receiving speech therapy and Chapter 1 reading assistance and students who were more successful in their academic studies.

This paper reports findings about the participation and learning of two target students, Maria and Sarah. Sarah is a white female from a middle class family. She was chosen as a target student because she was a typical "good student" who readily

completed assignments and yet seemed to write more for the teacher than for her own purposes. She participated in class daily and tended to dominate class discussions. Maria is a Mexican-American student who was chosen as a target student because she was quiet in class and unsure of her writing abilities. It was not uncommon to see her raise her hand hesitantly, only to put it back down again as though she changed her mind about what she wanted to say. Maria and Sarah were an interesting pair of learners to examine because of their contrasting levels of participation, different cultural backgrounds, different histories of academic and social success in school, and because they collaborated on their writing across the year. Their writing partnership provided an opportunity to explore ways in which they participated in the larger writing community as well as how they interacted with each other.

The girls' story of participation and learning cannot represent the experiences of all 22 students. It does provide a close look, however, at how shared control of a literacy curriculum played out for two learners. It therefore illustrates how the curriculum negotiation process is a rich resource for teachers to learn about their students' participation and learning. Teachers can use that resource to guide their future curriculum and teaching decisions.

Data Sources

Classroom lessons, group work, and writing conferences were documented with field notes, audiotapes, and videotapes across the year. All whole-class lessons were audiotaped from September through February. Whole-group lessons were both audiotaped and videotaped March through May. During individual work time, one audio recorder was placed at different four-desk clusters to capture verbal interaction. I carried an audio recorder with me whenever I worked individually with students. Large-group and small-group sharing sessions were either audiotaped or videotaped.

All students' written work was collected. This included journals, writing projects, and students' written reflections on their own writing progress. Lindquist and I audiotaped our planning sessions across the year and saved all written documents associated with planning (e.g., planning notes, schedules, calendars, and resource lists). Our informal planning decisions made during class were captured by my tape recorder.

Six of the nine target students were interviewed individually at the end of the year. Five of the nine target students participated in a group interview. Many students (including those who were not identified as target students) were interviewed informally as part of ongoing instruction and data collection throughout the year. All interviews were designed to learn more about how students made sense of the literacy learning experiences in writers' workshop, their own perceptions of the writing process and writing strategies, and how they perceived these experiences to be related (or not) to learning experiences in science and social studies.

Data Analysis

The intended and negotiated curriculum. A chronological summary was constructed of the intended curriculum across the year. Seven instructional units were outlined and daily lessons were summarized. This curriculum overview was used as a tool in tracing students' development over time, as a way to compare the intended and negotiated curriculum, and as a way to locate in real time what was occurring in the learning community when hypotheses about a particular learner's development were investigated.

The teacher's role in the negotiated curriculum. As the analysis of field notes and tapes documenting classroom lessons, sharing sessions, and writing conferences proceeded, two sets of categories emerged. One set describes the teacher's role in relation to developing curriculum and establishing and maintaining a learning

community (as described in Table 1). These categories were used to understand my role within writers' workshop and to compare and contrast my role to Roth's role in teaching science as we framed and carried out writing activities in each subject area (See Rosaen & Roth, 1993). The categories represent similarities in the science and writing curriculum and learning community:

(1) The teacher develops curriculum strands that are interwoven over time, and include a focus on developing a learning community.

(2) The teacher uses writing tasks as learning tools.

(3) The teacher connects writing tasks to a wider range a learning activities.

(4) The teacher scaffolds student thinking and participation in the learning community.

(5) The teacher creates writing and other learning tasks that are congruent with norms of interaction in a learning community.

These categories are summarized in Table 2 and will be described in more detail and illustrated in the discussion of the findings.

A second set of categories describes the teacher's role in supporting student learning. These categories were also developed for the purposes of comparing and contrasting the teacher's role (in relation to writing tasks) in supporting student learning in science and writing (see Rosaen & Roth, 1993). These categories include: (a) writing tasks and subject matter goals, (b) purposes for writing, (c) using writing to meet individual learning needs, (d) choice in writing tasks, (e) ownership, (f) audience, and (g) response. The categories are summarized in Table 3 and will be described more fully and illustrated in the discussion of the findings.

Student participation in learning community. Detailed notes describing the learning community were developed and focused on the following characteristics: the nature of language used by teachers and students, the overall atmosphere in the classroom, and the nature and level of participation. Using field notes, audiotapes,

videotapes, and student interview transcripts, an initial set of categories was used to trace each target students' participation in the learning community. These included: ownership of and commitment to writing tasks, using a variety of resources in writing projects, asking questions to clarify thinking, participating in a variety of activities to stimulate thinking, engaging in purposeful editing, engaging in writing as an ongoing process, and increasing control over multiple aspects of the writing process. These categories were later revised to include those described in Table 1 to capture more fully the multiple goals for our learning community, and to facilitate comparison of data across subject matter areas (science, social studies, writing). Transcripts of mini-lessons and writing conferences were also analyzed in relation to the teacher's role in supporting students' participation and learning in the learning community.

Student learning. To learn about students' growth in writing knowledge, skills, and dispositions to write, their written work, audiotapes of writing conferences, and interviews were analyzed using the following categories: themes explored in writing, writing style and voice, forms of writing experimented with and used, use of language structures, mechanics, and awareness of and attention to audience. Students' development was traced chronologically, using the curriculum overview to locate events in real time, discover themes and patterns, investigate discrepant events, and seek confirming and disconfirming evidence (Erickson, 1986).

The Curriculum and Learning Community: The Teachers' Perspective

When teachers create a learning environment--for example, by selecting the activities available to students and by directing or facilitating the discourse surrounding learning activities--they inherently control, to at least some degree, several aspects of the experience: the scope of the curriculum, the quality and intensity of learnings available, and the breadth and depth of the curriculum (Barth, 1969; Michaels, Ulichny & Watson-Gegeo, 1986; Westbury, 1972). Within this range of

options, students may also have some control (Bernstein, 1975). Table 2 summarizes the curriculum Lindquist and I developed and the kinds of experiences in which we participated with students. As the curriculum and learning community evolved across the year, we made a conscious attempt to increase students' control over many aspects of their experiences and students also asserted control in areas we did not necessarily anticipate.

The Writers' Workshop Curriculum

The year-long writing curriculum consisted of three major strands that were emphasized differently but woven gradually together (see Table 2, #1). Two of the strands focused on subject matter content: understanding and using the writing process to become better writers, and developing literary understanding and appreciation. The third strand focused on learning what it means to be part of a writing community and how to participate in one.

The fall months included three units designed to help students learn to to collaborate as writers (the first curriculum strand), to use the writing process strategically (the second curriculum strand), and to examine their aesthetic response to literature (the third curriculum strand). Students wrote a piece called "All About Me" that served as a focal point for getting them to examine and experiment with how to draft, revise, edit, and publish a piece, as well as learning to collaborate in improving their drafts. In the second unit, students participated in a group project where they created a group piece, an illustrated alphabet page. In addition to actually collaborating to produce their piece, they reflected on ways in which their collaboration was or was not successful across the unit. In October, they learned about and practiced different descriptive writing techniques, which led up to creating a written tour of their "haunted" school. In this unit students explored ways in which exaggeration and the five senses are used to create vivid description

Table 2: The Curriculum and Learning Community

1. Teacher develops curriculum strands that are interwoven over time and include a focus on developing a learning community.
* Creating and supporting the learning community * Developing writing knowledge and skills * Developing literary understanding and appreciation
2. Teacher uses writing tasks as learning tools.
* develop and use author's craft * participate in range of experiences as authors * learn to participate in community of writers * revise text
3. Teacher connects writing tasks to a wider range of learning activities.
* read * share * discuss * respond * inquire * collaborate * celebrate
4. Teacher scaffolds student thinking and participation in the learning community.
* students generate texts * encourage sharing and response to text * help students revise texts, using appropriate strategies and drawing on appropriate models * publish and celebrate
5. Teacher creates writing and other learning tasks that are congruent with norms of interaction in a learning community.
* share and explore texts publicly * encourage all learners to share texts * encourage learners to respond to texts with respect and caring * create opportunities for collaboration on joint problems and questions of mutual interest

(curriculum strands 2 and 3). Again, they reflected on their collaboration to create the tour (curriculum strand 1).

In early November the format of the classroom changed from more teacher-led activities to a workshop format where students had more independent writing time and regular times to share their own writing and published literature. They explored ways to respond to each others' writing that would be constructive and helpful to the writer and experimented with different forms of writing (e.g., poetry, stories, narratives, more alphabet pages, pop-up books, essays) (curriculum strands 1 and 2). Mini-lessons focused on finding meaningful topics, experimenting with different writing forms, and response to writing. The year closed with units in which students continued to write their own pieces while the class explored two questions: (a) In published and our own writing, what is the relationship among the author's topic, purpose, chosen form, and audience response?, and (b) Where do authors get their ideas, and how can published literature provide ideas and models for good writing? These units emphasized the third curriculum strand while still drawing on the first and second strands.

While students were learning *conceptual understandings and skills*, they were also *learning ways of knowing* and *ways of being in a learning community*. The qualities that were emphasized and valued in our learning communities and the kind of learning culture that was developing were consistent. For example, students were learning to articulate their aesthetic response to literature and critically appraise reasons why a particular piece evoked a particular response in them, contributing to their emerging knowledge of what constitutes "quality" in literature. Each students' ideas were valued as important starting points in their learning, and they were encouraged to link their emerging ideas about quality to their own writing.

Writing on a daily basis played a central role as a learning tool (see Table 2, #2). Students' written text was a vehicle for generating discussion among peers in

three different contexts. Mini-lessons were taught regularly to introduce new content to students (e.g., descriptive writing techniques, topic choices, use of details in writing) and generate discussion about published literature as models and how to improve one's writing. Second, students shared their own writing and their favorite published literature regularly. Through this sharing, audience response was emphasized with an eye toward helping students make explicit their responses and identify aspects of the author's craft that may have evoked a particular response. A third type of discussion took place during writing conferences, sometimes held individually between teacher and student, and sometimes held at four-desk clusters where one students' writing was discussed by students and teachers. The focus of the conferences varied, depending on where the student was in the writing process (drafting, editing, publishing), and the student's writing needs (e.g., spelling and mechanics, use of detail, word choice, plot structure, voice in writing). Students were engaged in discussion about text as often as they were engaged in generating text so that participating in a community of writers came to mean more than getting a writing assignment done.

Writing connected integrally to the wider range of learning activities (see Table 2, #3). We tried to help students see meaningful connections between our discussions of student-generated texts and the published literature they shared with enthusiasm. Routines such as sharing time that were scheduled for certain days of the week spilled over into other days, as though students could not get enough of hearing each others' writing and sharing their favorite literature. They also began to write outside of class, collaborate with each other over the phone, and share pieces with friends outside of our class and school. Moreover, some students began to make other connections by writing about social studies topics during writers' workshop. For example, Heidi composed a poem in which she expressed her feelings about slavery, a topic that her social studies class had recently studied. Timmy brought in

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an illustrated book about the Civil War to share during our literature sharing time. Lucas brought in some family documents that related to his great grandfather's involvement in the Civil War. We aimed toward developing the understanding that reading and writing are an integral part of our lives both in and out of school, and saw signs that students had a similar understanding.

The Learning Community

We understood our responsibilities as supporting students in their thinking and in their participation in the learning community (Table 2, #4), and tried to frame writing experiences in ways that were congruent with the norms of interaction we hoped to generate in our learning community (Table 2, #5). Student texts were treated as personal endeavors with which members of the learning community, including the teachers, might be able to be helpful. A primary focus in talk about text was on understanding the author's intentions so assistance could center around helping the author realize his or her own intentions instead of around advice that dictates what the audience (often the teacher) thinks the person should write. Talk about writing strategies and techniques was intended to match the needs of the piece and the author's purpose, which required careful listening, caring, and respect for the author as a person.

Writers were also encouraged to share with whom they felt comfortable, and we worked hard to help students see each other as a valuable audience. For some, this required a different way of thinking about whom they were writing for, since they were used to seeking only the teacher's approval for whatever they wrote. We encouraged them to at least begin by sharing with a partner, and then to move on to sharing with a small group or the whole class. The writer was in charge of this kind of decision.

The Curriculum and Learning Community in Action

After three introductory units in which students learned about a variety of writing techniques and strategies, Lindquist and I changed our teaching format from teacher-led activities where all students worked on assigned writing tasks to a workshop format.[3] After a brief mini-lesson, students had independent writing time to choose their own topic, form, and pace for each piece. They also had regular times to share their own writing and published literature.

A typical writers' workshop segment on November 20 illustrates how the three curriculum strands were interwoven and how writing activities were connected to the development of the learning community. The class period began with a brief mini-lesson in which Lindquist reviewed with students the variety of techniques the class had examined in published literature and experimented with in their own writing since September. She began by asking for examples of different kinds of revisions. Jake volunteered that he added details to his piece to clarify some of his ideas. Nan deleted some information that she thought did not fit with her piece, and Heidi deleted some repetitious material. Matt re-read his piece to make sure it made sense and added information as needed. The class continued on, reviewing the different techniques they had practiced in the previous three units: using exaggeration, using alliteration, making verb tense consistent, writing interesting lead sentences, adding details about personal reactions, and improving word choice. Lindquist was making a deliberate attempt to get students to make connections between the techniques and strategies students had learned about previously and their potential use with the students' current pieces.

She then said, "Let's try to make some connections about revision," and asked the students to think back to their photosynthesis unit in science. She reminded

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[3] See Rosaen & Lindquist (1992) for a more detailed discussion about our decision-making process in revising our instructional model, our collaboration, and our learning.

students that they had written down their beginning definitions of food for plants, and then revisited and revised their ideas later on in the unit. Then she commented:

> That's revision. In science you had some thoughts about what your ideas were about food for plants. You worked with those and you did experiments, you learned some things, and over the process of a few weeks, you have changed some of your thoughts about what food for plants is. That's the same thing as revising in writing. You start out with your draft and you get your thoughts down--that's the important thing, to get your thoughts down--and then you work with them. You experiment by trying these different techniques and looking at those to see if you can improve on your paper using any of those. You experiment by sharing your piece with somebody else, seeing does it make sense to them, do they understand it, do they get the message that you were trying to get across. It's the same process of changing. Revision is changing or seeing--remember we talked about revision, it's re-seeing? Okay, so you're changing your thoughts, you're thinking things through a little bit more.

Lindquist was trying to help students see that their peers played an important role in revising (building connections between curriculum strands 1 and 2, Table 2, #1) and that there were parallels between the way *ideas* are examined and revised in science and the way *texts* are examined and revised in writers' workshop (Table 2, #2). She concluded the mini-lesson by asking students to pay attention to where they were in the writing process that day, and to be aware of whether they were going back and forth among drafting, revising, and editing. She wanted students to perceive the recursive nature of the writing process and not reduce it to a linear set of steps to follow.

The mini-lesson was followed by individual writing time. My conferences with students at a four-desk cluster illustrate ways in which I tried to scaffold students' thinking and participation in the learning community (Table 2, #4) and focused on helping these emerging writers realize their own intentions as writers. My talk about writing strategies and techniques was intended to match the needs of the piece and the author's purpose. For example, when Heidi asked me to read a piece she had drafted about spending time at her grandparents' house, I began by asking Heidi to give me some direction in what to look for in the piece:

Rosaen: Okay, Heidi, can you tell me a little bit about what you'd like me to look at it for? What kinds of things are you wondering about?

Heidi: Anything that's listed up there (points to list of techniques on blackboard).

Rosaen: Okay, now that's an awfully big list so it's going to be hard for me to think about all of those things at one time. From this list that's on the board, what do you think you'd like to concentrate on in your revisions?

Heidi: I guess I could add some senses.

Rosaen: You want to think about that?

Heidi: Yes.

Rosaen: Okay, now why don't you read this out loud to me.

As Heidi read her draft, she noticed that one part did not make sense and stopped to add some points of clarification. Then she continued reading until the end. I responded initially by saying I noticed Heidi's use of the senses in her description to affirm that Heidi already used the technique. To help Heidi continue to grow as a writer, I decided to point out another technique that might improve the piece and used her own response as a rationale for why the technique might be helpful:

Rosaen: Now actually, I noticed that you did add some senses in here as you were working your way though.

Heidi: Yeah, like right here.

Rosaen: You know, one thing that I was thinking about is, I know you've said that you really have fun there, but if you added more details about your reactions to things, you would convince me more that you were really having fun. I know you believe that. But let's imagine that I'm reading your thing and I'm saying, "I'll bet she's just saying she has fun at her grandma and grandpa's house. I'll bet she doesn't really mean it." Are there reactions that you could add in here that could really convince me? Let's think about that.

As the conference proceeded, I showed Heidi concrete examples of places where she could add details about her reaction to events, eliciting specific reactions from Heidi for each spot they considered. When I noticed that Heidi was struggling with ways to express her reactions, I acknowledged that this kind of revision was not easy and tried to support her in her struggle:

Rosaen: This is hard. Let's think about it. What's fun about hiking and exploring in the woods? Imagine you're out there right now. There you are, out there, looking for sticks and hiking. What's fun about it?

Heidi: Me and my brother like looking for wild animals. We like looking for deer.

Rosaen: Okay, so once you get out there you start looking for other things and you start exploring? Okay, and do you try new places? Do you always know where you are?

I concluded the conference by reminding Heidi that the choice of adding details was still up to her:

Rosaen: So you could, if you wanted to, add some more details in this spot about what goes on out here that could help me believe that this statement [about having fun] is true.

Heidi: I've got more to think about for this part for reactions, plus I could add a sentence and say, like, um, "Once in a while, me or my brother step on a snake and it scares us."

Rosaen: Terrific! So that's two ideas. Now, the other thing we have to think about is how to manage making these additions because you don't have enough space right here to add all that. Did you like that cut and paste method that I showed Nan? Did you see me do that with her, where we actually cut her paper in half and made room for her to add more details?

When I noticed that Heidi had written on both sides of the page and the method Nan had used would not work, I showed Heidi a different method for adding revisions. Heidi was ready to begin her work on revising, and had some specific ideas in mind to get her started.

In the same manner, I participated in writing conferences with Sarah, Michelle, and Nan. In response to where each person was in the writing process (drafting, revising, editing, publishing), I tried to tailor the conversation to meet the needs of the author (for further learning) and the piece (to help the author realize her intentions). I began each conference by finding out where the student was in the writing process and what kind of piece she was working on.

To begin my conversation with Sarah about her draft of a story about going up north, I probed, "Tell me a little bit more about what you want to talk about in your piece." After listening to a long explanation of Sarah's ideas for her plot, I offered

the following response, thinking that she may need help in managing her efforts to write a longer piece:

Rosaen: You know what I was thinking about as you were talking to me about all these different things? Have you ever tried writing something with chapters, instead of just one paragraph after another?

Sarah: Yeah, I have.

Rosaen: Have you ever tried writing, say, an illustrated book with chapters?

Sarah: That's what I planned on doing.

Rosaen: You know, it seems to me like, instead of just trying to come up with one sentence that would capture all of it you could come up with a title that would make a good book and each chapter could tell about all those different things.

Sarah: Each chapter I could probably make (inaudible).

Rosaen: Yes. Yes. Would you like to try using that form this time and see what would happen?

Sarah: I want to write a longer story.

Rosaen: One thing that you might want to do, Sarah, is try writing a lead sentence for the cat, and one for the lodge, and another one for the swimming pool, and make a list of lead sentences now. You might change your mind later and not ever use them, but that will help remind you of how you were thinking about organizing your chapters and the main ideas that you were thinking about including in them.

Sarah: Okay, I wanted to make a book, because I thought I could type it at home and stuff, and make a cover.

Rosaen: Sure.

Sarah: Because I've always wanted to write a long book. I've already, kind of, with my brother. He loves to write and he has all these really neat ideas about things that happen. So he gives me all these ideas and I just kind of stick words in and then I illustrate the pages.

Rosaen: Well I think you have a great idea for a book of your own. Why don't you try working on, just for a few minutes, working on some leads and then you can get right into one of your chapters.

Sarah: Okay.

In this instance, I was concerned that Sarah might get bogged down with composing a lengthy piece and suggested chapters as way for her to work on her piece in

sections. I suggested writing the lead sentences so she would not lose sight of the rich level of detail she had already envisioned.

Nan identified the kind of assistance she needed to proceed with her piece by explaining, "I just got done editing. Could you read it and make sure that I got all the words spelled right? I already checked through it, but I want to make sure I did them all right." To bring Nan into the editing process, I responded, "Okay, what I'd like you to do is read to me one sentence at a time and let's look at each sentence." I chose this approach to enable Nan to get more practice at identifying misspelled words and discussing correct spellings; it also provided a way for me to point out other mechanical problems and work on them with Nan.

Michelle began her conference by reading her entire narrative aloud. To find out more about what Michelle was thinking, I began with a question and responded to Michelle's request honestly:

Rosaen: Okay, do you have questions that you want to talk about with this piece? Are there things you're wondering about that might help you improve it?

Michelle: I was wondering if the part about Bandit chasing fish sounded okay. (Inaudible)

Rosaen: You're asking me was it clear?

Michelle: Yeah.

Rosaen: Yeah, it did [sound clear]. You know what I was thinking here, thinking about this list that's on the board of things that you could think about improving it with. I think this piece could use some five senses.

Michelle: I already have some.

Rosaen: You have some in here already, like you said, "She's soft and cuddly." Now, "pretty." I can't see her. I can't see what color she is. I can't see what size she is. I don't know if she's big or fluffy, or what kind of a cat. So you could help me see her better.

Michelle: That's pretty good. Okay.

At this point in our conference, Michelle seemed to understand the general task--to add more detail--and she understood that using the five senses was one way

to develop details. However, to make sure she had some concrete images of the kinds of things she could add, I probed more about the cat's physical characteristics to get Michelle talking about her. My purpose was to help Michelle realize what an expert she is on her subject, and how many details she had at her disposal to include.

Rosaen: That would be one thing. I like this part a lot where you wrote about the running around and stuff. Are there sounds that might go with this one?

Michelle: Yeah, stomping and barking!

Rosaen: There you go, you have all kinds of ideas.

Michelle: For like, pretty, I could put like what color she is, and say how skinny of a cat she is.

Rosaen: Yeah. Let's see, you said she's part Siamese and part tiger. So that part I think I can picture. I know what the body type is of a Siamese.

Michelle: Yeah, but she sort of looks more like a, she's got Siamese part in her face, she looks like a Siamese in her face. But then her markings are really tigery.

Rosaen: See now that would really be interesting to hear more about what she looks like. Also, does she sound like a Siamese cat with that low cry? They go, Grrrrrr. Does she sound like that?

Michelle: (laughs) Yeah.

Rosaen: See that could be interesting. I think you know a lot more about this kitty than you're telling me yet. You just got started. This is great so far.

As I did with Heidi, I asked Michelle if she needed to learn about a strategy for adding the details and proceeded to show her some options.

Each conference illustrates the personal nature of the scaffolding I tried to provide for each students in relation to her learning needs, and the importance of sharing in improving one's writing (Table 2). I was candid about my response to their drafts, being careful to be encouraging and supportive but yet helping each student learn more about how use her knowledge of writing techniques and strategies to improve the quality of her piece. As the year proceeded, Lindquist and I helped students become less focused on the teacher as respondent by providing

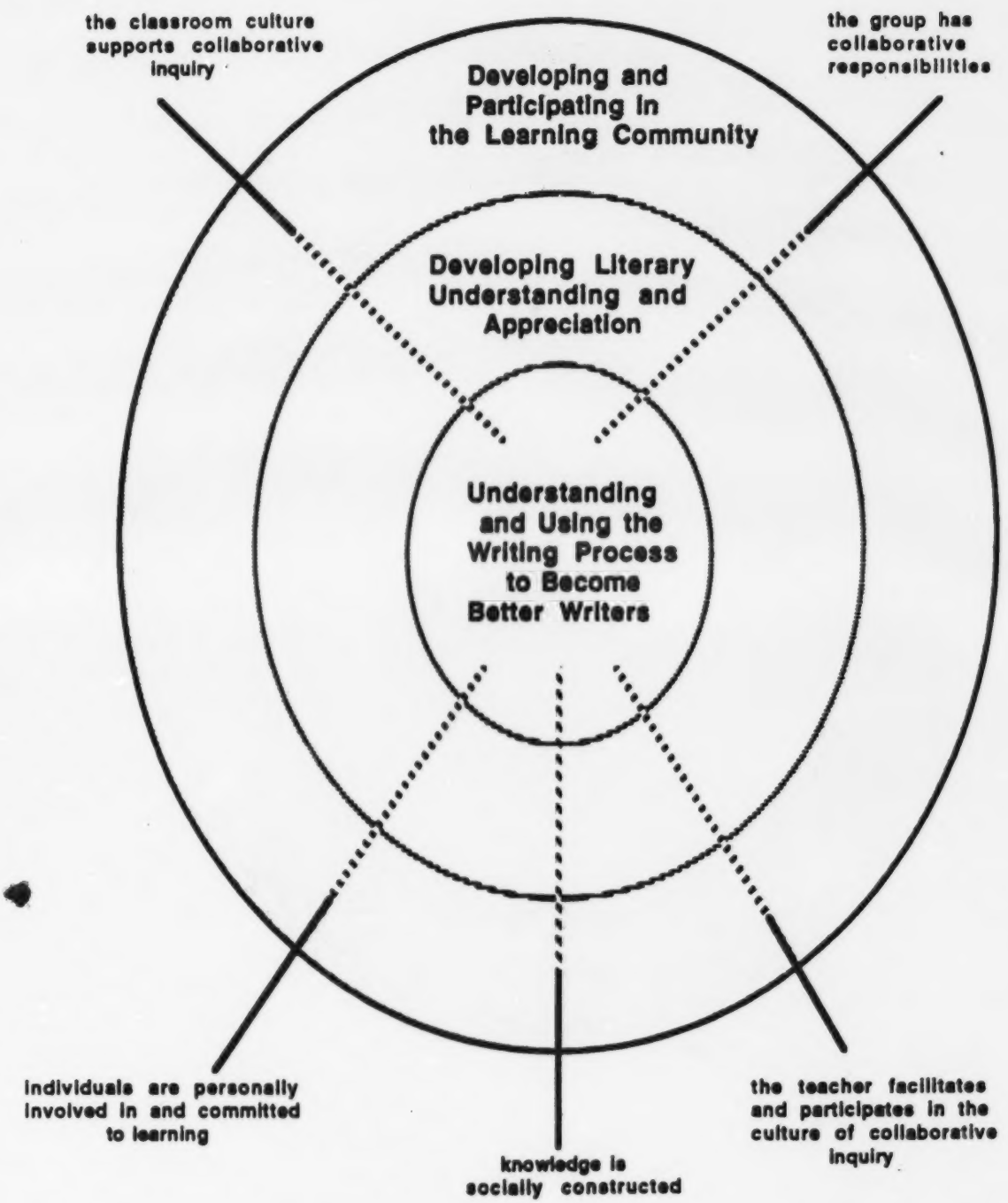
regular opportunities for students to share with each other. Eventually, students spent more time helping each other improve their drafts and placed less emphasis on seeking the teacher's response.

Curriculum and Learning Community Connections

As this brief visit to our classroom illustrates, we attempted to foster strong connections between the curriculum and the learning community, not only by our selection and sequencing of content, but also through the kinds of experiences in which students engaged. Figure 1 illustrates these connections. The three curriculum strands are shown as nested circles to emphasize how the goals in each area are interwoven. We encouraged students to link their study and discussion of published literature with their study and discussion of their own texts. Since we encouraged these linkages by trying to create certain kinds of experiences, the five broad qualities of the learning community (elaborated in Table 1) are shown as penetrating all three nested circles. Our role included supporting students' thinking and participation in the learning community and creating tasks that are congruent with the norms of interaction in a classroom focused on learning. We wanted our social context to represent what it means to be a writer and practice the craft of writing.

Figure 1:

CURRICULUM STRANDS IN A WRITERS' WORKSHOP


the classroom culture supports collaborative inquiry
the group has collaborative responsibilities
Developing and Participating in the Learning Community
Developing Literary Understanding and Appreciation
Understanding and Using the Writing Process to Become Better Writers
individuals are personally involved in and committed to learning
knowledge is socially constructed
the teacher facilitates and participates in the culture of collaborative inquiry

Learning to Listen to Students: The Teacher's Role Unfolds

When Lindquist and I began our collaboration, we saw ourselves as learning professionals. We were both experienced and knowledgeable language arts teachers who were inexperienced at using a writers' workshop instructional model. We each drew on our unique backgrounds and experiences to support each other as we made a transition from using more traditional approaches to teaching writing to working within a writers' workshop format. As the year progressed, we became more skilled at listening to our students to understand better their needs and interests as developing writers. Our changes enabled the curriculum to become more responsive to and specifically focused on our students' particular learning needs and interests. As we found ways to provide occasions for students to engage in the range of decisions authors make and sought ways to support their development as writers along the way, we saw in our students an increased commitment to and interest in their writing and fuller participation in our learning community (for more detailed discussions of students' development as writers in the context of the learning community, see Rosaen with Hazelwood, 1993; Rosaen & Lindquist, 1992; Rosaen, Lindquist, Peasley & Hazelwood, 1992).

I analyzed the roles we took on in trying to support our students' learning in relation to the seven areas listed on Table 3: writing tasks and subject matter goals, purposes for writing, using writing to meet individual learning needs, choice in writing tasks, ownership, audience, and response. To illustrate how these roles played out for individual writers, I explore examples of my interactions with the two students, Maria and Sarah. These interactions took place between mid-February and the end of May during the last two units of the school year, Authors' Design and Authors' Exploration.

Table 3: The Teacher's Role in Supporting Student Learning in a Writers' Workshop Instructional Model

A. Writing tasks and subject matter goals
Teacher determines writing content and process to be taught in relation to student selection of writing topics, purposes, audience and form.
B. Purposes for writing
Teacher encourages expressive, transactional and poetic purposes for writing. Teacher emphasizes relationship among three purposes and ways different purposes can help students improve their writing.
C. Using writing to meet individual learning needs
Teacher responds to individually defined writing tasks according to individuals' writing learning needs.
D. Choice in writing tasks
Teacher encourages student choice of topic, purpose, audience and form. Enables students to experience full range of decisions authors make and provides opportunities for teacher to support students as needed in writing process.
E. Ownership
Teacher encourages ownership of text, which includes ownership of ideas in text.
F. Audience
Teacher is member of larger audience which includes peers. Students write for self and/or audience.
G. Response
Teacher and peers respond orally to multiple aspects of text (e.g., topic, form, writing techniques, ideas in text, overall reaction).

I became interested in exploring my interactions with Maria and Sarah for several reasons. Sarah is a white female from a middle class family. She is a typical

"good student" who readily completed assignments and yet seemed to begin the year writing more for her teachers than for herself. She frequently sought feedback and assurance from me about her writing and did not seem particularly interested in hearing from her peers. In fact, I sometimes wondered why she shared her writing with me because she seemed to be more interested in talking about what she saw in her own writing than in hearing my feedback. She participated daily in class and kept her hand raised throughout discussions. During both whole-class and small-group interactions, Sarah tended to dominate. It was not hard to notice Sarah's participation on a daily basis and she sought interactions about her writing regularly.

Maria is a Mexican-American student who was quiet in class. Early in the year I noted that she was unsure of her writing abilities. When I interacted with her about her writing at the beginning of the year, I noticed myself saying things that I hoped affirmed her strengths as a person as well as trying to support her in her writing. Maria rarely participated in class discussions and frequently looked like she was not paying attention at all. Sometimes when she raised her hand she would put it down again, as if she either changed her mind about participating or forgot what she was going to say. Yet, as I studied her participation more closely, I learned that she did a great deal of writing across the year, and did participate in our learning community in her own quiet way.

Maria and Sarah formed a writing partnership early in the year that may have been sparked by participating in a four-person group with whom they completed an assigned project. Together, they began a chapter book about teen life and they eventually drew other students (including boys) into contributing chapters. In addition, their book inspired several other students to write their own chapter books about teen life. For a time period, the various teen life stories dominated our Wednesday sharing sessions as well as our students' writing in and out

of school. I became interested in learning more about how two girls who were so different in their confidence levels, cultural backgrounds, academic success, apparent social status in the class, and participation in the larger learning community worked together and what my role in supporting their learning might be. How did I define subject matter goals and attempt to meet their individual learning needs while also attending to the learning needs of the whole class? How did choice, ownership, audience, and response influence their writing experiences and what role did I play in facilitating those experiences? In what ways did we share control over the curriculum and how did our experiences influence their participation and learning?

Subject Matter Goals and Purposes for Writing

When we launched the workshop format in early November, we provided a series of mini-lessons on poetry writing as a stimulus for getting students to stretch their imaginations regarding writing topics and forms. By February our classroom was flooded with writing of all kinds and abundant interactions surrounding these texts. Although we had supported students in learning to respond to each other's pieces, we were concerned that our patterns such as having students share their own writing and their favorite literature should not become mere routines without substance. We wanted these recurring experiences to help them grow as writers. For example, my February 6 journal entry indicates my perceived need to go beyond general sharing and celebration to supporting students in learning to give more focused feedback:

> Today is author's day. Timmy is ready to share generally. We could be doing more with getting kids to share for a particular purpose. I think we're ready to go *beyond* general sharing to use sharing to get help, assistance, feedback--more for helping with techniques. It's also important to celebrate writing, but I think integrating sharing for particular purposes would help keep sharing fresh, focused, purposeful.

Our Authors' Design unit was created in response to this need. In this unit we focused on how authors plan and design pieces. We framed our study around two broad questions: (a) How do authors make decisions about their topic, main idea, audience, desired audience response, and written form to plan, design, and create a piece? and (b) How does the authors' design influence and shape the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing)? Since students were in charge of making decisions regarding their topics, writing purposes, audience, and form (see Table 3, Section A), we took responsibility for helping students develop strategic awareness and skills in planning and designing their pieces. We also saw this as a way to discuss the quality of pieces: Does my piece evoke the type of reaction in my audience that I had in mind? Why or why not? Moreover, the authors' design framework made the relationship between purposes for writing (expressive, transactional, poetic) and the form of writing more prominent: What form of writing best suits my purposes (see Table 3, Section B)?

One way we modeled and supported thinking about these issues was to discuss published literature. In social studies class, taught by other LISSS colleagues, our students were learning to read their textbooks critically by using concepts such as the following to think about historical events and their portrayal in written texts: perspective, democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, justice, rights/duties, racism, prejudice, discrimination, sexism, exploitation, power and empathy.[4] They had discussed the role of women, children, and enslaved people in history, and were just beginning to study Native Americans. To build on their learning in social studies and connect it to our study of literature, we discussed poetry written about and by Native

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[4] For a detailed description of the social studies curriculum and students' learning, see Hasbach, C., Roth, K., Hoekwater, E. & Rosaen, C. with LISSS Colleagues (1993). Powerful social studies: Concepts that count (Elementary Subjects Center Series No. 88). East Lansing: Michigan State University, Institute for Research on Teaching, Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects.

Americans to consider the extent to which the poetry evoked empathy for Native Americans. After reading a set of poems we asked students, in groups, to select one that they felt best helped them understand and empathize with the Native Americans' experiences, and why. We tried to support students in finding specific examples that would help them understand and make explicit why and how a particular poem had evoked an empathic response in them.

Following this, we read a poem entitled "Girls Can, Too!"[5] by Lee Bennett Hopkins and asked our students to consider what the author's message meant to them personally, and ways in which the design of the piece may have contributed to their response. After both Sarah and Heidi read the poem aloud, Lindquist asked, "Okay, what about empathy with this poem? How does empathy fit into this poem, do you think?" As usual, Sarah's hand shot up immediately and she responded, "He's trying to get you to feel how the girl felt." As the class explored what that meant, one idea that emerged was, perhaps the girl in the poem was better than the boy and the author wanted us to realize that girls are better than boys. This was followed by a lively discussion and much disagreement about whether that statement is accurate or not. Finally, Nan wanted to take a poll: "Who thinks girls are better than boys?" As hands were raised, Lindquist raised follow-up questions such as, "How many people aren't sure? [How many think] that neither are better? That they're equal?"

Throughout the questioning, fervent hand-waving, and lots of side conversations, Maria raised her hand to both "aren't sure" and "equal." She made a side comment to someone sitting next to her, but did not offer a comment to the group. In contrast, Sarah ventured, "Okay, we might be a tad bit?" In the face of much opposition from several students, Sarah offered the qualification, "I think girls are better than boys in some ways and boys are better than girls in some ways . . .

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[5] This poem is printed in a volume edited by Lee Bennett Hopkins entitled Girls can, too! A book of poems, Watts, New York, 1972.

Girls can have babies and boys can't." When others persisted in wondering if that means girls are better generally, Sarah replied, "Yeah, but I just think girls can do stuff that boys sometimes can't."

To this line of thinking Lindquist raised the question, "Do you know what this conversation reminds me of? Of thinking back to at the beginning of the year when we talked about stereotypes in science? . . . Do you think we might be stereotyping?" Sarah replied firmly, "Having a baby is not a stereotype." While debate continued along these lines for several minutes, Maria looked anxious and a bit puzzled as she kept raising her hand and putting it down again. She looked as though she was trying to retrieve an idea she kept forgetting. Maria's hand finally stayed raised and when Lindquist called on her, she said, "I forgot."

It seems that both Sarah and Maria were engaged in thinking about the issues raised in the poem, but only Sarah participated in the debate publicly.[6] Class discussions like this encouraged me to dig more deeply to understand how Maria and Sarah were experiencing the support in thinking about writing that we were trying to provide.

Supporting the Composing Process

We used the authors' design framework to get students thinking about their own writing in a similar way. This entailed trying to get students to see that the teacher is but one member of a larger audience, their peers, and trying to help students learn to respond to others' writing in helpful ways (see Table 3, Sections F and G). For example, on February 27, Sarah chose to share the beginning of a piece entitled "Isn't Teen Life Wonderful?". This was a piece she collaborated with Maria and others in the class to write (each author was responsible for writing a different

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[6] Sarah and Maria showed similar differences in participation in social studies. Through close study of their participation, very interesting differences in their learning were also uncovered. See the report cited in footnote 4 for details on contrasts in the girls' learning in social studies.

chapter, but they collaborated on ideas). The student who had shared before her had been asked to explain who her audience was for her piece and what reaction she had hoped to evoke. In turn, Sarah began by explaining who her audience was and what reaction she hoped to evoke in her readers. Instead of modeling a response to the student texts, I chose to highlight ways to move the *sharing process* along in my comments and leave the *response to the piece* to the larger audience, her peers. When the students did not specifically respond to whether their reactions matched Sarah's intentions, I intervened to raise the question. These aspects of my participation are underlined in the excerpt below:

Sarah: I'm writing this for myself, and for Maria, and Ed.

Rosaen: Those are the only three people you think would ever read the story?

Sarah: Well, no, and I was writing it for anybody who wanted to read it, but. . .

Rosaen: Do you think grown ups would be interested in reading it? Did you have a certain age group in mind?

Sarah: Teenagers, and like, from ages 10 through about 17, 18 years old. Well, I want you, when I read this I want you to feel like you're actually going along with me, like, um, it won't say like, I went to (inaudible) class and then to (inaudible) class. I'm gonna describe it like, um, like you're, I want you to feel like you're there too.

??: Okay.

Lindquist: Speak louder, Sarah, it's really hard to hear you.

Sarah: My piece is called "Isn't Teenage Life Wonderful?"

"Happy birthday," my friend Maria exclaimed as I dragged my tired body through the junior high door. March 16th, a new year, 15 years old, supposedly a new life. Yeah, right. Just then Ed walked by, so cute, so fine, and also number 52 on the basketball team. His good looks immediately woke me up. Just then the bell rang and I rushed to my first class, social studies. I can't wait.

I took a seat between Maria and Alex. Maria was doodling on her notebook, "I love Ed, I love Ed." Maria is so lucky, she gets Ed and I don't. Just then Maria passed a note. It said, "Dear Sarah, Alex looks good today but Ed looks better. Love, Maria. P.S. Write back."

Maria always wants me to write back. I didn't know what to say. I just wrote, "Dear Maria, I feel the same way. Sarah."

That's all I've got so far.

Lindquist: So you're going to add to the rest of it?

Sarah: Yeah, it's gonna be long so I'm reading it in pieces. Each author, they all have a different section.

Lindquist: Okay, I think you've got some comments here.

Nan: Who in real life is Ed?

Sarah: He's a boy that rides my bus and goes to Moore and he's really really cute. Heidi?

Heidi: I like the way that you really explained how you were feeling when you got up (inaudible).

Sarah: Thanks. Alex?

Alex: Why did you choose to write something about teenagers?

Sarah: Because, because it's an interesting subject, and um, and basically what I'm writing is what I wish would happen. I'm not finished with it yet.

Rosaen: How about the reaction that Sarah was hoping that you'd have that you would kind of feel like you were there with her seeing what she saw. Do you think that she was successful at that?

??: I think I could [see what she saw].

Sarah: Later I'm gonna describe Ed better and like bring new characters in my story.

Throughout the unit we worked back and forth between modeling and discussing response to published texts using the authors' design framework and encouraging students to use the framework to respond to each others' pieces during sharing time.

During writing conferences we tried to help individual students become more aware of their own writing process, such as reflecting on where their ideas come from and how they develop them along the way (see Table 3, Sections C and D). After Maria and Sarah had been working on their teen life story for quite some time, I focused my conference with them on two areas. First, I wanted to learn more about how they had composed the piece; I needed to know what their intentions were if I was going to support them in writing the piece. Second, I wanted to help them

become more aware of their own composing process so they could reflect back on it to understand what is helpful to them when they write and what is not.

Maria and Sarah tended to summarize their text instead of describing how they were writing it. Underlined sentences in the excerpts below show how I probed to find out more details about the composing process:

Sarah: I want to read chapter 3. . .

Rosaen: Now you seem, you're going right to that chapter. Can you tell me why that's one that you especially want to read right now?

Sarah: I don't know, it's our new one and we think we're getting, it's the last one we wrote and we think we're getting better each time, but. . .

Rosaen: Better how?

Sarah: Like, the first chapter, I mean think we're getting better as we write because we know more of our subject and we're getting more into it.

Rosaen: So what's making the writing better?

Maria: Well it's our. . .

Sarah: I think we're getting into it and it's coming to exciting parts 'cause we're not just. . .

Maria: It's more interesting.

Sarah: We're not just telling, see, in the first two chapters we really had to tell where we are, what our life is and stuff like that.

Rosaen: OK.

Sarah: And so now we're, now we're kind of getting into it.

Rosaen: So now you're kind of digging into the actual story?

Sarah: Everybody knows, everybody knows what happens and everything like that.

Rosaen: OK.

Sarah: So this is in the second part. OK, we were just at lunch and we're jumping, OK (begins to read), *Soon biology was over. It was time to go. Yay! Kay and I and Maria.* . .

****

(after Sarah reads draft)

Rosaen: Maria, tell me how you're, you're writing this together. Now I see that Sarah's actually writing it down?

Maria: Well, I did half of it. . .

Sarah: She wrote this part.

Rosaen: OK, you do some of it too?

Sarah: Yeah, but we both like. . .

Maria: . . . write ideas. . .

Sarah: She'll go home and think, "Oh, this would be a neat chapter," and write it and then I come and I say, "Oh yeah, this is good, " and then I add my thoughts into it.

Rosaen: OK.

Sarah: So we're kind of collaborating.

Rosaen: So you're really doing it together then.

Maria: Uh huh.

Sarah: Yeah, but sometimes I just end up doing the writing.

Rosaen: And where are your ideas coming from?

Maria: Well some of this is true. . .

Sarah: And some of it isn't. . .

Maria: It's really happening, like, in our first chapter. . .

Sarah: Yeah, like Maria, we wrote it the day that Maria did pass a note to me and say, "Aaron looks good but Ed looks better."

Rosaen: OK, so that's something, you started. . .

Maria: Some of it's really happening. . .

Rosaen: . . .with some real things.

Sarah: Yeah, and then and then this is just kind of like a fantasy, you know. . .

When I noticed that Sarah was tending to dominate the conference, I tried to pull Maria into the conversation by asking her a direct question about her role in the writing process. I knew that she was playing a key part in writing the chapter

book and wanted to make sure both she and Sarah were aware of Maria's contributions (see Table 3, Section E). Whole-class experiences were not a fruitful place for me to find out about Maria as a writer or to support her as a writer. In contrast, conferences were a likely starting point.

From this conference, I was able to learn about the actual collaborative process, for example, that the girls worked on their piece outside of school and that they worked interactively to generate story ideas. I was also able to ascertain that Maria felt ownership for the chapter book, that despite Sarah's more dominant presence in sharing the piece with others, Maria agreed that she shared authorship with Sarah. Since Maria's participation in our learning community was so private and unobtrusive, a conference like this was an important source of information about her level and style of collaboration. It was important to know that she had a prominent role in composing the piece even if she was not prominent in sharing it with others.

A Source for Struggle

Early in the year we worked hard to shift students' perceptions from thinking that writing is done by students for the teacher to believing that authors realize their own intentions through writing and that teachers and peers are available to support that process. Gradually, we saw students take on increased control, voice, rights, and responsibilities as writers. We had not anticipated fully what might happen when students shared control over the curriculum more democratically (Shannon, 1989) and found the need to further redefine our roles as teachers in ways that would reflect shared control (see Table 1, teacher's role). Maria and Sarah taught us a great deal about this issue.

One problem we bumped up against was that students were more enthusiastic about generating texts for their own social purposes than they were about improving the quality of their writing (our academic purposes). Maria's and Sarah's teen life

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story seemed to have more to do with building connections in their social lives at school than with learning to write better. Recall that in response to Alex's question about why she chose to write about teenagers, Sarah responded, "Because, because it's an interesting subject, and um, and basically what I'm writing is what I wish would happen." In the following excerpts from a small-group sharing session, the underlined portions show how I struggled to keep the focus in the conversation on helping Sarah and Maria learn about students' response so they could improve the quality of their writing (academic purposes), while the students continued to pursue what the next plot events would be (social purposes):

(Sarah has just finished reading her draft)

Rosaen: Did you want some reaction or did you just want to read it?

Carey: I like it. I liked it a lot!

Sarah: I don't know, did anybody. . .

Jake: I liked. . .

Rosaen: What did you like about it?

Carey: Everything.

Rosaen: Everything.

Jake: I already knew that she liked Barry. She told me.

Carey: Everybody knows she likes Barry.

(overlapping comments)

Ed: What chapter, what chapter are you going to put in that you kiss him?

Sarah: Well listen to this chapter, I mean my gosh this is a sleep over. We rented the whole darn Holiday Inn. Do you think we would sleep alone?

(group laughter)

Sarah: I mean (laughs). . .

(group laughter)

Carey: She says, "Do you think we're gonna sleep alone?" (group laughter)

Jake: Have fun.

Sarah: I didn't mean it that way!

Rosaen: Is there a way that when people read you could be a more helpful audience than to just raise your hand and say "Can I read?" as soon as they're done? Remember when I said, did you come over here to just read or did you come over to be an audience?

Carey: To be an audience.

Rosaen: What about some of the others of you? Can you offer a comment that could help Sarah know how she's doing?

Mona: I could. I thought it was pretty neat that she said that (inaudible). . .

Sarah: Can I go over there with Maria and Mrs. H. because they're interviewing. .

Each time I review this segment of conversation I feel anew the struggle I experienced at the time! I also recall my intense feelings of frustration when Mona offered a comment to Sarah about how she responded to a particular part of the story and Sarah ignored it by saying she wanted to leave the group and talk with someone else about her story. For me, experiences like this raised fundamental questions about my role and responsibilities as a writing teacher: When students share control over writing decisions, what are appropriate ways for teachers to provide ongoing instruction that still honors their control? When differences in teachers' and students' perceptions arise, how should these differences be resolved?

The next day when Jake read his chapter (a continuation of Sarah's and Maria's story), my response to these issues shows that I had not come very far in figuring out what to do next. Once again, my comments were aimed at getting students to respond to aspects that *I* thought were important (e.g., getting the audience to state explicitly their reactions) while students' actual responses showed that they were still caught up in the plot development as it related to their social lives:

(Jake is reading the end of chapter 5 after Sarah shares chapters 2 and 3))

Jake: *. . . gave me a kiss and the bell rang. So I went home and pinched myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming. But sure enough, I had red lipstick on my cheek.*

(overlapping comments)

Rosaen: Is there anything you want to ask your audience?

Maria: I've got to say something. Sarah and Jake, um, on chapter 5, it skipped over to his party.

Sarah: I know 'cause I'm not finished with chapter 3 yet. 'Cause he wrote this at home.

Maria: Oh.

Rosaen: Do you want to know anything about their reaction?

Carey: Sarah was about to cry. She had water in her eyes.

Sarah: No, I just. . .

Rosaen: Do you want to know anything? Do you want to ask them anything?

(overlapping comments)

Laticia: I want to say something.

Maria: Just say it.

Rosaen: Laticia, go ahead.

Laticia: (inaudible) This is true life (inaudible).

Carey: What?

Maria: They do go together.

Laticia: For real

Sarah: OK, OK, it's partly true, partly true.

Jake: What's partly true?

Sarah: The story.

Jake: Partly. Not chapter 5 though.

Sarah: Maria's going with Ed and . . .

Ed: Are you going with Johnny?

Maria: She doesn't like Johnny, she likes Jake.

Buddy: Let's get to reading!

Rosaen: Jake and Sarah, was there anything that you want to ask your audience? Was there a reason that you read this, that you wanted to find anything out?

Sarah: Ohhhh. . .

Ed: Is it romantic?

Jake: Yeah, how romantic is it?

Carey: A lot.

Sarah: Yeah. Did you like it?

Carey: You should have seen Ed. He was over there laughing so hard.

Ed: I like the part where the milk man came . . .

What I can see now that I could not see at the time is that the students did not need to talk *about* their response because they were *living* their response by showing their interest and delight in the story development. Jake and Sarah probably had no trouble seeing that the audience was greatly entertained by their chapters. The audience also seemed to share the authors' purposes--to live out some teenage fantasies vicariously, perhaps to behave more boldly in their social lives on paper than they might in real life. For example, Laticia was assertive about pointing out that she knew which events were true or not, which may have been a way for her to carve a niche in the actual social situation.

At first I thought of these experiences as examples of the students' *resistance* to my curricular intentions and the support I tried to provide. I felt troubled that they were not embracing the response process in the way I had envisioned, and worried that these struggles would somehow dampen their enthusiasm for writing. However, Lather's (1991) discussion of using the research process to understand relationships of power helped me think about the situation. The idea of "reasons for resistance" implies that we (teachers) are right and those resisting (students) are

somehow wrong. In contrast, the idea "sources for struggle" acknowledges the power of both teachers and students (Lather, 1991, p. 134). If I saw students as "resisting" the "legitimate" reasons to share--to make one's response explicit by talking about it--I would miss understanding how they actually experienced the sharing sessions, or what was legitimate for them. Alternatively, if I viewed these experiences as "sources of struggle" for both students and myself, I could better capture both sets of intentions and interpretations.

I came to understand, by listening to these students and thinking hard about why they behaved as they did, that genuine response can entail *showing* and not just *talking* (see Table 3, Sections F and G). If I recognized showing as a legitimate form of response I could build on that to also help students learn to articulate and explain their actions so they could learn to be more helpful to each other. I also realized that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find ways to deepen students' understanding of the writing process and their participation in our learning community that would complement and not work against my overall intentions of helping students become authors.

Joining Our Students in Learning

Our Authors' Exploration unit was an attempt to address some of the issues that surfaced out of our struggles. We maintained our commitment to support our students in improving the quality of their writing, but worked harder to honor their current interests and need for autonomy. We thought of our task as developing productive ways to channel our students' intense interest and motivation in more fruitful directions. In this unit we explored two questions: (a) Where do authors get their ideas for writing topics and forms? and (b) How can different types of literature (e.g., mystery, fantasy, subject matter trade books, author study, and biography) provide ideas and models for good writing?

Instead of trying to second-guess what kinds of books students were interested in, we engaged them in some activities that would help us find out. For example, we explored the school library's book collection and asked our students to create a "wish list" for the librarian to use as a reference when she ordered new books for the coming year. We organized book exploration groups (based on their library work) to help students find others in the class who shared their interests in particular authors and genres. We framed open-ended questions to support the exploration process and joined our students in pursuing the questions: How or where do authors get their ideas for writing? What do authors do to make their writing better? How does using a specific form of writing make reading about a topic more interesting or enjoyable? What can we learn about improving our own writing by exploring a book set?

We suggested that students try a topic or genre that was either new to them or that at least might steer them in a different direction than they were currently going. Since it was getting near the end of the school year we cast this as a "capstone" experience for which they might carefully weigh what their final piece of the year might be. Some students embraced the opportunity and ventured into new kinds of writing or tried out new topics. Rusty tried (although he eventually decided to abandon) writing a series of poems about hamsters. Iris did some research on flowers before writing a poem about them. Tim tried writing an essay on sharks. Brenda tried writing her first mystery story (one of her favorite kinds of books to read). Maria and Sarah set aside their teen life chapter book and each began writing their own fantasy.

This unit was not without its own sources of struggle. Even though we structured the book explorations so that students could pursue their own topics and interests, some students felt that the time spent on this focus interrupted their writing. For example, during an end-of-year group interview (5/23/91), Sarah made

a point of telling me she did not like or benefit from the fantasy exploration group in which she and Maria participated:

> It wasn't really all that fun because we didn't get any special ideas. Because we would read the book and then we would read like the end of chapters and stuff like that. And really we didn't see much fantasy in them. We didn't get any ideas . . . I already had an idea of what I wanted to write, but I couldn't write it because we were looking at books.

This source for struggle was not over what the students should talk about as in the previous examples, but over how students should spend their time. Sarah offered an alternative suggestion that could resolve the conflict:

> I think that if you had like a certain table that had books at it for fantasy, and then like if you were stuck for a topic you could say, "Ok, I want to write a mystery," and then go to the mystery table.

Feedback like this from students has helped me think about alternative ways to provide support to students (see Table 3, Sections C and D) without taking away their control over how they spend their time to address their current writing problems or patterns (see Table 3, Section E). As Sarah said, they could have spent time exploring books as needed, rather than as the teachers legislated.

Thus, supporting students' writing development while making room for and honoring their own voices and rights was a difficult tension to manage. It required giving up many aspects of control that teachers have claimed for many years, while still not abandoning our responsibility to provide instruction and support. As Calkins says, ideally writing classrooms will have both high student and high teacher input and "[teachers] need not be afraid to teach, but we do need to think carefully about the kinds of teacher input which will be helpful to our students" (Calkins, 1986, p. 165).

Learning About Support From Maria and Sarah: The Student's Perspective

I cannot understand whether my input was helpful to Maria and Sarah without bringing their interpretations and voices into the process. What did the experiences

across this school year mean to them, and what part might this redefined teacher role (Table 3) have played in their learning? In relation to their starting points as writers at the beginning of the year, what are important areas of development? Sarah and Maria were interviewed formally at the end of the year (5/29/91 and 5/22/91 respectively), and a few times informally across the year. Their reflections about their participation and learning helped me pursue these issues.

Becoming Part of the Learning Community

Both Maria and Sarah are aware of changes in how they participated as writers in our learning community. On November 8, Maria commented:

> Maria: I thought I would never be good in English because last year it was just my worst class, so I'm like, "Oh no, this year I hope we don't have English because I'm going to be worse at it." Because I never thought I could do it because every year since third grade I've had a bad, you know, like score in English. I think I'm doing better this year.
>
> Interviewer: Why do you think you're getting better?
>
> Maria: Well, because, I don't know. It's just that, I just try to do more effort into it than just like listening and doodling and not even doing my work right . . .But this year I think it's a lot more funner.
>
> Interviewer: Do you think you've put in more effort this year?
>
> Maria: A lot more effort.
>
> Interviewer: Like what? Give me an example of effort.
>
> Maria: Well, like when we had to work in our group, like last year, I never liked to work in the groups. I'd just sit there and just doodle and not even pay attention and this year I'm more into the group than I was last year . . . In my group I can work with them more than I could last year.

What we as teachers perceived to be somewhat a lack of participation was, for Maria, an increase compared to previous years. Even though she did not participate actively in our large-group discussions, her actual participation in group work was an important step for her.

Maria also gained confidence in herself as a writer, which seemed to support her in participating in our learning community, at least in small groups or with

Sarah. This confidence seemed to develop by learning more about what the writing process entailed, and learning that authors are people who write. She commented during her end-of-year interview:

> Maria: Well, in writing workshop, see before I didn't like writing because I never knew and then we started talking more about authors and things, going through steps. I sorta like got interested in it and I, you know, I thought, well, if we can talk about authors I can put myself into authors', you know, feet, and just act like an author.
>
> Interviewer: Okay.
>
> Maria: When we go through the steps, like how to make your piece better, by putting details, you know, authors.
>
> Interviewer: So, you feel more like an author now?
>
> Maria: Yeah.
>
> Interviewer: You feel like it's not just this big foggy idea now, there's like certain things that . . .
>
> Maria: Yeah. You could just sit there and you could think, "Oh, I know what I could write!", write it down, then go back through it and make your corrections, erase things that you don't want . . . Before I couldn't do that. I had to sit there for about like five, ten minutes before I'd think of a piece.
>
> Interviewer: Okay, and you realize that there are steps now that you go through?
>
> Maria: Yeah.
>
> Interviewer: Like you come up with an idea and you go back to it and revise it and you can go ask yourself questions to help you go further?
>
> Maria: Because we get papers like that and we have to go, "Well, what do you think makes authors better at writing?" And you sit there and you *think* for a while and when you think more in like, now, you know, you get the feeling like oh, gosh, I'm an author! 'Cause you write things down that you're doing.

Maria's more limited learning community, mostly her world with Sarah, was where she learned to share and improve her writing:

> Interviewer: When do you share your writing?
>
> Maria: I don't really share in front of the class. I usually share, you know, two people, you know, me and Dr. Rosaen, Ms. Hazelwood [research assistant], I just share with those guys the pieces. I really, the one I really did it with was Ms. Hazelwood, where we sat down a lot and we've shared our ideas. So I'm pretty close to her on my pieces, like my personal pieces. I talk to her about them.

Interviewer: Okay.

Maria: And when no other teachers are available.

Interviewer: So you don't do a lot of sharing with classmates?

Maria: No, I [share] individually with people.

Interviewer: Okay, do you share with Sarah?

Maria: Yeah, that's really actually the only person I share with . . . she respects my feelings and she won't laugh at my pieces if they're wrong. She'll just help me correct it . . . I talk to her about them. I read them to her and I'll go, "Well, what do you think?" after. I'll get like her advice. I'll go, "What do you think of my piece? Should I change a little?" and she'll like say, "Yeah, Maria, You should change one part in there, two parts, or change it around," and do things like that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Maria: I ask her ways.

****

Interviewer: Can you think of any other times that you could have shared something, a piece this year but you didn't?

Maria: I've, um, I could have shared a lot, like poetry, 'cause usually we have literature and poetry day on Wednesdays and Mondays, but I just would listen to people. I wouldn't get up there and share. So I could've shared all this year but I just didn't.

Interviewer: And why didn't you?

Maria: I'm just like scared people will laugh at me, you know, and make fun of my piece.

Maria's growing confidence was fragile and she was not yet ready to risk sharing with the whole group. In Maria's eyes, she was safe with Sarah and with her teachers and Hazelwood, our research assistant (who talked with Maria a great deal about her personal feelings), but not with the entire class.

Sarah's end-of-year individual interview revealed a different kind of change in becoming part of a learning community. She began the year participating often in whole-class discussions, but virtually ignored her peers as a potential audience for her writing and instead opted to seek out her teachers. She also began the year taking a dominant role in collaborative work. Her description at the end of the year

of how she drafts a piece shows a different kind of connection to and interaction with her peers. She saw her peers as her audience (not her teachers) and she sought their help and advice:

Interviewer: So when you're putting all your thought into [a piece], what kinds of things are you thinking about?

Sarah: Oh, will my audience like it, is this easy to understand, how can I word it better so they aren't thinking something else when I want them to think about this? Let's see, when I read this sentence, what could you think about instead of what I want you to think about? And then like maybe Maria thinks other stuff so we have all these problems and so like we write them down kind of and then we say, "Okay, we've got to get a perfect piece here," obviously.

Interviewer: So you think some things are important and Maria thinks some different things are important maybe? Is that what you're saying?

Sarah: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So then you have to think about which ones. . .

Sarah: Well, then we have to hit all of them because I guess some people, I mean Maria is thinking these things so obviously some people might have a problem with these things.

Interviewer: Right. So you've learned some different things to think about?

Sarah: Yeah. So we write and we try to move, "Okay, is this hard to understand?" Okay, you know? It's like we write a sentence and then we go down the list. "Is it hard to under. . .okay, is it easy to understand? Yes. Check. Is the words great, are you thinking the right thing?" So we go over to like Sasha or something and say, "Will you read this and tell me if you understand what we mean here?"

Interviewer: Great.

Sarah: You know and we'll ask other people and stuff to get their input.

Along with seeking help from others on the clarity of her writing, Sarah came to appreciate the role sharing could play in judging the quality of her writing:

Sarah: We have this sharing corner where everybody goes back in the corner and you can share a piece if you want to.

Interviewer: Oh, great. So you do that with a lot of your pieces? So you can get extra help? You like that?

Sarah: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Okay, I'd like to ask why you share your writing. Are there any other reasons that you might share your writing besides getting help?

Sarah: Just for ideas. To see if they like it.

Interviewer: Okay, what about after your piece is finished?

Sarah: I share it because I want to know what their reaction is.

****

Interviewer: So what do you think makes a piece of writing really good? Like how, when you're writing something, how do you know that it's really good?

Sarah: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know if it's good until I share it. When I share it and if everybody tells the truth and says it's good, if Brian tells me it's good then it's good.

Interviewer: What kind of criteria do you think people use to say that writing is good. What would you use to say that writing is good?

Sarah: Well, if I read it and I read it smoothly, like I just kind of read it and I didn't have to stop and look at the (inaudible) and say, what do they mean, and just, smoothly read the piece and then, "It sounds neat to me," then it's good.

Interviewer: What do you mean by neat?

Sarah: Like it just is interesting, a neat topic, interesting.

Both Sarah and Maria changed as participants in our learning community across the year. Maria's concept of herself as a writer helped her venture further (although not fully) into the community and explore ways this participation could help her as a writer. Sarah changed her definition of writing from that of writing for the teacher to believing she could realize her own intentions with the help and support of her peers. By collaborating and sharing she came to appreciate the value of her peers in helping her improve her writing.

Learning From Struggles

Maria's and Sarah's reflections on writing their teen life story taught me a great deal about the importance of having the patience to wait for writers to draw their own conclusions about what they are attempting to do. Recall that during the Authors' Design unit I felt that students were ignoring the framework we were using to get them thinking about audience response (our academic goals) and instead

focusing on how the latest plot of someone's teen life story would unfold (their social goals). Instead of interfering with the absolute flood of teen life stories that seemed to never end, we began the Authors' Exploration unit as a way to try to influence students to shift gears and try something new. Maria and Sarah joined the fantasy book exploration group, and Sarah explained the sequence of events this way as she talked about the new fantasy piece she started:

Interviewer: What did you pick first, your topic of bears or the idea that you wanted it to be a fantasy?

Sarah: Oh, the idea that we wanted it to be fantasy, because we were supposed to pick a group and we were doing our authors' exploration unit to be a group subject, biography, or fiction. And we picked fiction and then we had to pick, even more than that, we had to pick what kind of group we wanted to be in fiction. So what kind of fiction we wanted, realistic, whatever, and the we decided that we wanted to do fantasy. That was what we wanted to do. And when we picked that group, we decided that we were going to write a fantasy.

Interviewer: Okay, and then you started brainstorming topics and you started with the dolls idea?

Sarah: Yeah, and then, and then Maria said, "Well, I like teddy bears, I don't really like dolls. You can make teddy bears really cute."

Unlike their teen life story where they divided up which chapters they would write, this time they diverged into writing separate pieces, although they both wrote about teddy bears. Maria commented, "See, 'cause the teen one was me and Sarah's and now this is mine, but she just helps me sometimes." Their partnership shifted from co-authorship to co-helpers.

As our end-of-year interviews with them continued, it was very interesting to learn how they perceived writing their teen life story in retrospect. Maria commented that she became bored with writing the teen story after a while, although she thought she learned something important from the process about the limitations of the teen life topic:

Interviewer: Do you like this one [fantasy] better than the other ones or is it the very best one you've written?

Maria: Well the teen one was like the best, but now that I've thought about, this one will probably be the best because I got bored with romance. A lot of romance you get bored with it, but adventures you can keep on adding more adventure. You can't keep adding more romance. Just keep on, you know, I don't, I get bored with it. . .

****

Interviewer: Which piece did you learn the most about writing from?

Maria: Um, well, the teenage romance.

Interviewer: Okay, what kinds of things did you learn from writing that piece?

Maria: Well, like romance is, I learned that 'cause I like adventures, you know? I learned that you can't, when you're dong romance, you can't imagine, you know, make things adventure.

Interviewer: Okay, and why did you think that you learned a lot about writing from this piece?

Maria: Well, I learn it because (pause), how can I put it? (pause) I learned a lot of it working with it 'cause romance wasn't, I learned it because romance wasn't my thing. I learned from it, you know, I wouldn't really write another romance again.

Now that she had a point of comparison, Maria could see her teen life piece differently. She could see that plot ideas were restricted to what might be plausible and, perhaps, what would fit the real-life characters she and Sarah had included in their piece. She realized that this topic did not sustain her interest over time.

Sarah changed her mind about writing teen life stories for slightly different reasons. As time passed and she shared her chapters with different classmates, some of them were not as enthusiastic as others had been:

Interviewer: How do you think that this piece [fantasy] compares with other pieces that you've written this year? Do you think it's the best piece?

Sarah: Best, because when I was writing Teen Life, I was writing it, I don't know, it kind of dragged. I went, that story, I've done since the beginning of the term, I've been writing that teen life story, that and other books in our series, and it kind of got dragged, I mean . . .

Interviewer: Do you think it's because you spent so much time on it, or . . .

Sarah: Well, I don't know, because like Sasha was reading it and it didn't have any suspense like I like to do now. And she just kind of acted like she was falling asleep, and I said, "Okay, this isn't good." You know, and it kind of dragged . . .

As with Maria, having a point of comparison helped Sarah to see some limitations in the teen life story that she could not see at the time. Sasha was not engaged in reading the story and Sarah began to suspect the reason was the lack of suspense, something she was working hard to include in her fantasy.

These interview excerpts are very interesting to me, especially in relation to the frustration I felt while Maria and Sarah were engaged in writing their teen life story. I was convinced that I was absolutely unsuccessful in getting Maria and Sarah to consider issues of quality as they were writing. I was convinced they had not heard a word I said. And I think I'm probably right. I think it was not until later, until our Authors' Exploration unit, that they were able to use ideas about quality (from our current and previous units) to appraise their teen life story retrospectively.

Consider Sarah's reflections about making the quality of her writing better:

Interviewer: What do you think that you've learned this year about making the quality of your writing better?

Sarah: Well, before Teen Life I was just like writing and writing and writing and I didn't bother revising or drafting or anything like that. I would just write and write and write. And then with the Authors' Exploration unit I started to kind of, make the writing a little better. Because like she said, "Okay, you can't just write a draft. 'Cause that isn't going to sell or isn't going to do anything that you want to do with it. You've got to make it better. Don't, don't write your whole book then revise the whole thing at once. Write a chapter, revise that chapter, draft the chapter, edit the chapter, publish the chapter, then write the next chapter." And see, but instead of doing that I kind of just, draft and edit and rewrite by myself while I'm just kind of doing it.

Interviewer: So, but you feel different now, since then?

Sarah: Uh huh, 'cause I used to just write and, "Oh well, it doesn't matter what it, it's never going to get published."

Interviewer: So how do you think that's changed the quality of your writing, to do it this way?

Sarah: Because now my writing is better because it's been edited and drafted and it makes more sense because I've gotten other people to read it . . .

When Sarah was asked about advice she would give to a teacher about what fifth graders should learn about writing, she again pointed to the Authors' Exploration unit as one that helped her become a better writer:

> Sarah: Authors' Exploration unit, where you give them the books and the stations and tell them to make their writing better. Don't wait 'til the end of the year for them to start making their writing better. You need to do it right away.
>
> Interviewer: Because you think that's what really was the turning point to help you write better?
>
> Sarah: Uh huh . . .

It is interesting that this is the same unit about which Sarah had commented that she did not get any "special ideas" when she explored the fantasy book set. In her perception, the Authors' Exploration unit was our first attempt at getting students to work on improving the quality of their writing when, in fact, we had been focusing on making our writing better all year!

Sarah's language indicates that something happened during this unit that made her feel more responsible for producing a high quality product, and we are not sure what that might have been. Perhaps it was framing this as her final "capstone" piece of the year, perhaps our approach in the unit was more meaningful to her, perhaps she was developmentally at a point in her writing where she was ready to attend to quality, or perhaps Sasha's boredom with the teen life piece really struck a powerful chord. Whatever the reason, Sarah did show that although she may not have regularly used many of the writing strategies and techniques we taught throughout the year, she did become aware of them and eventually found a way to apply them to her own writing.

Maria also seemed to gain some specific ideas about writing quality from participating in the fantasy exploration group, and also showed glimmers of readiness to venture into the larger learning community:

> Interviewer: Now, thinking about writers and authors that you've read, which one writes in a way you especially like? Which one of those kinds of people?

Maria: Roald Dahl.

Interviewer: What makes you like his writing?

Maria: He does a lot of imag . . . his imagination, he uses good imagination, and adventure.

****

Interviewer: What do you think would make your writing even better?

Maria: If I get more, if I get more . . . feedback. You know, just like, the positive feedback from people. Not, "Oh, I like it," Not like that 'cause you know there's something wrong with it. I would like to get positive feedback from people.

Interviewer: And what if they had negative feedback for you?

Maria: I would ask them what parts they didn't really like and they would tell me and I would go back and read it a couple times and then I'll make the corrections. . . if I do this piece by the end of the year, I want everybody to read it and I want them to give me feedback.

Both Sarah and Maria paid attention to different aspects of the writing community and different aspects of improving the quality of their writing at different times. The gradual but steady support was not evenly received nor used consistently across time. Instead, Maria and Sarah seemed to make sense of it and make it their own at a pace that matched their readiness.

Linking Particular Stories to the Future

What can Maria's and Sarah's unique stories teach us? It is not possible to generalize that all students in our class shared their interpretations, or that another class in the future would respond in the same way. This rich and complex picture of our attempts at sharing control of the curriculum does point out, however, what a rich resource students are for seeking insights into curriculum and teaching questions.

Learning About Participation in the Learning Community

Many times educators seek answers about the effectiveness of their curriculum by looking at the end products (e.g., tests, written assignments) students create. I took a different approach in this analysis because simply looking at end

products could not provide answers to many things I valued in our classroom. Since learning to participate in a community of writers was a prominent goal in our classroom, I needed to find ways to describe and understand what Maria and Sarah did in our learning community and how they interpreted their experiences. I needed to know if the options available to them and the range of choices were appropriate for supporting the kind of learning and participation we envisioned. An end product such as a teen life story might provide some clues about their learning (e.g., their skill in writing description and using detail, their ability to structure a story, their use of imagination), but would not tell me enough. I also wanted to know when and how they worked with others, what kinds of experiences were significant to them and why, and how they managed the range of decisions authors make throughout the writing process.

We intended for our classroom to embody a writing community and therefore needed feedback on the extent to which the community supported students in developing the kinds of knowledge, skills, ways of knowing, and dispositions we intended. These stories show how attention to the amount and type of participation in the learning community enriches a teacher's picture of students' learning and provides feedback about their curriculum and pedagogical decisions.

Sources for Struggle are Resources

When things are not going well in our classrooms, we have a tendency to think the students are the problem. My initial reactions to Sarah's and Maria's sharing of their teen life story tended to fall into that category. I felt frustrated that their writing seemed to address more social than academic purposes, and worried about what they were *not* doing, instead of perceiving what they *were* doing. As I got better at learning to listen to the students and to perceive their participation--whatever it was--as feedback about the curriculum, I was more able to pinpoint what the sources of struggles were and how to address them. We wanted to channel the

enthusiasm we saw rather than dampen it, so we made a conscious attempt to find out more about our students' reading interests and link them to their writing. By learning about our students and responding to their interests, we influenced them to move beyond the teen life craze and try new forms of writing. Teachers can learn to make better use of the information available to them--how their students interpret the curriculum--in making curriculum and instructional decisions.

The Meaning of Control

The purpose of sharing control over curriculum with students is to enhance the likelihood that learning activities are meaningful to students. Maria's and Sarah's stories underscore the importance of *shared* control, and not merely trading off either students or the teacher having it at one time or another. For instance, although a workshop format allows for student choice of topic, form, audience, and pace for a piece of writing, control over these aspects of the writing process includes more than autonomy of choice (Rowland, 1986). It also includes respecting the students' interpretations of the range of options and the purposes they form. I was initially willing to "give" Sarah and Maria control, but only if their interpretation of the process was similar to mine. From the end-of-year interviews, I learned that by eventually trusting them, by being patient, and by continuing to teach, they would come to their own conclusions about spending so long on the teen life story and would eventually move along in their learning.

I learned that students must respect the teacher's interpretations as well. For a time period, Maria and Sarah interpreted their newly-found control as absolute and seemed to interpret teacher input as either irrelevant, poorly timed, or unnecessary. Most likely, this closed off some learning opportunities for them, such as when Sarah only realized at the end of the year that she was supposed to be working on improving the quality of her writing. Perhaps more direct discussion of this issue with Maria and Sarah would have helped them learn to respect our interpretations

sooner just as we learned to respect theirs. Through true sharing of control (instead of taking turns or engaging in power struggles), the likelihood increases that students can benefit from teachers' knowledge and expertise and at the same time make it their own:

> Of course it would be unrealistic to suppose that each time we initiate an activity, or offer specific instruction or guidance, we can expect children to make discoveries which are in every sense new to us. Usually we shall have trodden the ground before they reach it. But there is a strong sense in which as soon *as they begin to tackle real problems, problems as they have constructed or interpreted them, then learning takes place and the knowledge which is gained is not merely a copy of our own, but is a reconstruction of it.* Such knowledge may view the same objective world and concern itself with the same facts, but will offer a perspective upon them which is individual and to that extent unique and new. (Rowland, 1986, p. 37, emphasis added)

When we got better at sharing control with our students, better at listening to them and respecting their interpretations of the writing process, we were in a better position to provide teacher input that Sarah and Maria could reconstruct and make their own.

Students are Resources

These stories reveal ways in which teachers and researchers can examine the literacy activities within a writers' workshop and make sense of how the social context for literacy development shapes students as developing writers. They illustrate ways to go beyond looking at students' written products to gain insights into how the social organization and interaction in a classroom contributes to students' development as writers over time. The stories place students in a prominent position in the curriculum-making process and provide a lens for understanding how students interpret curriculum as it is negotiated in classrooms.

Shaping writing tasks and subject matter goals in response to learners' interests and needs creates tensions and dilemmas for teachers in carrying out their responsibility to see to it that all students grow as writers. It is not enough to provide time, choice and audience for writing. Teachers must foster growth but do so in ways

that allow students to develop a sense of ownership for writing and a commitment to their own growth.

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